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Sonnets and other Poems



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Sonnets and other Poems.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE BRAITHWAITE, M.A.,

OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND VICAR OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST. PETER THE GREAT, OTHERWISE SUBDEANERY, IN THE
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DEDICATED

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY CHARLOTTE S. CALTHORPE GOUGH,

(OF PERRY HALL, STAFFORDSHIRE),

WITH THE

GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

THE AUTHOR.

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SPRING.

—o—

RETURN, bright Spring, thou promise of the year !
And once again thy loveliness prevail,
With notes harmonious, over hill and dale ;
Wipe off from nature's face the sullen tear
Of Winter — thou, who dost, indeed, appear
His first-born child and his succeeding heir ;
But yet unlike him, for in aspect fair.
On the year's threshold let thy banners rear
Emblems of hope ; thou star, which dost foretell
The promised blessings in the time to come ;
Opening the depths of earth with mystic spell,
Giving for tempest, calm ; and light, for gloom :
And thus, on each return, pre-figuring well
The life which shall succeed the chaos of the tomb.

March, 1839.

TO THE POET LAUREATE,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH ESQ.

—o—

THE time is come — the happy voice of spring
 Is faintly whispered in the yet leafless grove,
 The incipient notes of harmony and love
 Sweet recollections in their cadence bring,
 Of things which far surpass a vulgar uttering.
 'Tis for a genius like thine own to show
 The vernal beauties as they bloom or blow.
 'Tis thine to soar on the delighted wing
 Of meditation : and with scan sublime,
 The flowery book of nature to peruse ;
 And all the sweet varieties of time
 To bring within the limits of the muse.
 But not without good moral is the rhyme,
 And, therefore, for the world, thy subject, Words-
 worth, choose.

March, 1839.

THE BUD.

—o—

THERE is a promise in the lovely bud
 Of perfume for the zephyrs and of leaves which lose
 Their varied colours in harmonious hues ;
 For nature blends them *as art never could*,
 While she would share with us her moral good,
 And teach us, how 'tis possible, in spite
 Of different temperaments, to unite
 In one indissoluble brotherhood ;
 Forming in such relief that *they* should be
 The very beauty of society.
 And soon, sweet bud, the sun shall perfect thee
 In the bright flower, and thou shalt gaily bloom ;
 For thou art yet but in thine infancy,
 As man himself ere he attains the tomb.

July, 1840.

SUMMER.

—o—

“THE child is father of the man.” Incipient Spring,
 To thee the full-orbed Summer owes its birth,
 And all the beauties it presents to earth
 Of variegated leaf or many-coloured wing ;
 Of incense breath’d from flowers, which it doth fling
 With lavish hand upon the wanton breeze,
 Fitfully playing ’mong the waving trees
 In notes aerial, worth the cherishing.
 So one age helps another by its light,
 Which after-time improves : as spring tide lays
 Foundation for the summer, and, in nature’s right,
 Is as the day-spring to the noontide rays ;
 So time precedes eternity, and the night
 Of sorrow here the heaven-born day of praise.

March, 1839.

HUMILITY.

—o—

THAT hilly slope, so beauteously attired
 With a profusion of the brightest gems,
 Which, flowering, deck it as with diadems,
 Yet knows not *wherefore* it should be admired,
 Fit emblem offers of a soul inspired
 With all the virtues of the human kind,
 Yet lost to self, and to its merits blind,
 Is not by vain, ambitious motives fired ;
 But, like the hillock, keeps an even station,
 Beloved by all, yet deaf to adulation.
 'Tis thus that voiceless nature speaks, and HE
 Who taught from nature truths of greatest force,
 Would have us trace it in its moral course,
 And learn in what consists — Humility.

March, 1839.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

—o—

SWEET midnight songster of the vale,
Lonely complainer, suited is thy note
To souls who would all worldly thoughts shut out,
Who *court retirement*, and the shadows hail,
'Neath which to weep in silence, Nightingale ;
Whose only pleasure and delight is had
Even in the griefs of recollections sad,
Bringing of by-gone days a mournful tale—
Deep is the voice of night — no sound
So deep — whilst on the midnight air
Thy accents float; as calmly to propound
A lesson suited to man's grief and care;
For in his night of sorrow, most profound,
A voice still bids him hope, and not despair.

June, 1839.

A WALK IN THE MONTH OF MAY.

—o—

I HEARD the chorus of the beauteous sky ;
 I saw the tinge of evening's chastened gold ;
 I heard the streamlet's murmuring, and it told,
 As in its sea-ward course it passed me by,
 Of life, which makes for death — time, for eternity.
 I saw the flowrets, in their bright array,
 Do homage to the happy month of May,
 Bending their heads with every zephyr's sigh.
 These whispered that the voice of mirth must cease,
 The sun of life, ere long, in darkness set ;
 That man must journey to his final peace,
 Urging his way through mazes of regret ;
 That beauty her pretensions must resign,
 And all submit to general decline.

Appleby, 1839.

AUTUMN.

—o—

SEE Autumn comes, as if with regal sway,
 Bespeaking blessings on the labourer's toil,
 Enriched with varied tints of golden spoil,
 And clad in nature's bountiful array —
 To thee, as to their end, direct their way,
 The Spring-tide and the Summer, as the sun
 Verges towards the west (his course of mercy run)—
 O ! be it mine, in youth's short, fleeting day
 (The spring-tide of my life), to lay in store
 Bright hopes for time to come ; that I may spend
 My autumn-age in peace, nor yet deplore
 That my gray hairs bespeak approaching end ;
 And when I reach short life's pre-measured score,
 Lord, to the grave, in peace, thy servant send.

April, 1839.

AUTUMN.

—o—

I LOVE calm Autumn, for its joys are those
 Of deep devotion : silence doth pervade
 Th' expanse of nature, and a pensive shade
 A sober quiet o'er the daylight throws ;
 (Type of the Christian's might, and in his might,
 repose).*

There is in Autumn such communion dear
 Of the fond absent, with the present cheer —
 Belonging to the present, though of that the close :
 The present — all but gathered to the past —
 And hast thou seen in some cathedral aisle,
 The checkered sunbeam lighting on some tomb,
 As tears illumed by resignation's smile ?
 And heard the robin's note amidst the gloom ?
Then hast thou Autumn *seen as in a cast !*

* ISAIAH xxx. 15. — “ In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE FOET
LAUREATE.

—o—

OPPRESS'D, my soul sighs deeply in her tears,
For oft-times, Wordsworth, hath thy spirit made
More bright the sunshine of my sunniest glade ;
Whose lingering, too, shall tinge full many years
(If such be granted) of life's hopes and fears :
Or gild, with light of thine own hills, the shade
Which may, ordained of Heaven, as yet o'erspread
The pathway, that my trembling footsteps wears.
An autumn leaf, bright in thy tints of thought,
More bright by sun-set beams upon it thrown.
Kindled within the circle of the Throne
Of Him whose Spirit filled thee, tho' remote.
Rest, Poet, in the churchyard,* till the spring
Renew its life, its verdure perfecting.

— Grasmere.

May, 1850.

BLEASDALE HILLS, LANCASHIRE.

—o—

METHINKS, were HE in this secluded glen,
 O'er whose pure thoughts the Spirit's wing did brood
 And warmed to living shapes of active good,
 That he would not your summits green disdain,
 So far remote from din of life profane ;
 But on your sward, as on a pavement given
 By consecrated rite, to hopes of heaven
 Bend the meek knee—accordant to the strain
 Of prayer and praise—and thro' the live-long night
 Muse on the works of HIM—the Infinite—
By all unseen, save by the eye that sees
 In secret, and whose all-pervading view
 Bright stars but shadow, and ethereal blue
 And flowers, found everywhere, and streams and
 trees.

November, 1846.

APPROACH OF WINTER.

(NOVEMBER 18, 1850).

—o—

“THE blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear”—
 Beginning, progress, compliment of hope!
 Praise to our God, praise for the ripened crop!
 For morn, noon, even of the toil-worn year;
 Now “plodding homeward”—as the stars appear—
 To rest,* and, in his dreams, perchance to smile
 Upon a nation, grateful for his toil;
 Blessing, on suppliant knee, heaven’s bounteous care.
 Enjoy thy Sabbath-hour, blest year! and though
 The song of praise be absent from the sky,
 And “leaf” forget “his neighbour leaf to kiss,”
 And whisper to the wanton breeze of bliss—
 Mute praise ascend, as incense wafted high,
 And silence GOD bespeak, in breathings low.

* PSALM civ. 23. — “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.”

November, 1850.

WINTER.

(DECEMBER).

—o—

SEE Winter comes—the whole year's general cloud,
 To Spring-tide beauties, Summer's flowers,
 And Autumn's pride of golden hours,
 Bearing death's winding sheet — a snowy shroud
 Spread on Earth's bosom by the tempest loud —
Now silence reigns profoundly — not a sound
 Of a leaf's quivering from the trees around !
 As bones which lie in one impartial crowd
 Under the cloistered temple ; so *they* lie
 In large heaps of decay, under the parent tree —
 In the fourth quarter of man's life, to die
 Is (so ordained of Heaven) *his* destiny.
 To read the book of Nature, therefore, try,
 For Nature is a Sermon, man, to thee !*

* “ Nature is Christian, preaches to mankind,
 And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.” — YOUNG.

TO A LADY,

ON THE EVE OF HER DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND.

—o—

AND shall we meet again ? O tender thought,
 As oft recurring as the word — Farewell —
 Shrining the counsels of the Invisible
 In clouds ; yet clouds of golden fringe inwrought,
 Or rainbow hues, from beams reflected, caught
 And shed on falling tears. Benignant Grace
 Thus to enkindle hope on desolation's trace,
 And mercy bring, by paths of vengeance brought.
 The parting sorrow prove a healing balm —
 And, Time, with gentlest hand that balm apply.
 Roll, billows, roll a passage to the calm :
 Blow, Winter winds, reveal a Spring-tide sky :
 To brief regrets succeed Thanksgiving's Psalm.
 God's Grace be with thee, lady fair — Good bye !

August, 1850.

TO A LADY,

ON THE EVE OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR GIVING THE FONT, WROUGHT
 BY HER OWN HANDS, A PLACE IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF E . . . N
 H . . . S.



LADY! a debt of gratitude is due
 To thee, whose hands so matchlessly have wrought
 This font of stone; to be, to-morrow, brought
 In sacred ground for planting. Be there few,
 In thy sweet hamlet, stream-encircled, who
 Shall not its water's cleansing virtue prove,
 By true conversion of the heart, in love.
 The Blood that *heals those waters* "bathe them
 through and through!"
 To future generations doth the hour
 Of this Font's consecration thee unite,
 In bonds, indissoluble, of good will.
 Rest sweetly on thee Heaven's all balmy power!
 As o'er thy work soft moon-shed beams, at night,
 With creeping footsteps, silently shall steal.

June, 1850.

THE PATRIARCH JACOB.

GENESIS, XXIX. 10 16.

—o—

Now Jacob's footsteps solitary roam ;
 His body weary and his mind depress'd
 With thoughts, which, *only to himself address'd*,
 Awaken *soft remembrances* of home :
 Remembrances which come, as soothing breezes
 come.

A rugged stone supplies his only pillow,
 His curtain, perhaps, the shadow of a willow.
 But sleep can seal his eyelids in this dome
 Of Nature's making, and sweet dreams can press
 A healing balm upon his troubled mind ;
 And he can feel delight, though comfortless ;
 For angel-wings are floating through the wind ;
 And even *now the brightest glimpse* of Heav'n
 Is to his sightless eyes in Bethel giv'n.

February, 1840.

MOSES.

“And behold, the babe wept.”—EXODUS xi. 6.

—o—

WHAT was it made thee weep, unconscious child,
 That thou wert cradled on destruction's brink,
 Within the bulrush-ark? O! didst thou think
 It was, indeed, thy own dear mother smil'd,
 When Pharaoh's daughter, of his prey, beguil'd
 Destruction? Say, didst thou weep *for her*?
 She mourned at home without a comforter
 O'er the lost charge her joyless hours that whil'd.
 “God moves mysteriously:” thy plaintive cry
 Of motherless desertion reached the heart
 Of one who *felt* and *could not see* thee die,
 From the fond bosom of thy rest apart.
 And who may say but Israel's bright career
 Claims a deep interest *in an infant's tear*?

February, 1840.

“And the king was much moved, and he went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept : and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.” — 2 SAMUEL xviii. 23.

— o —

THERE is *an arrow* in the speed, O king,
 ’Twill find its way to the most tender part
 Of thy subdued, yet still paternal heart;
 An arrow, *sharply pointed* with the sting
 Of victory, and thy *security* will bring
 A nearer grief than could a traitor’s threat.
 And thou must let *that* go, with deep regret,
 To which with hope—a *father’s*—thou didst cling.
 For now the tumult of the battle’s o’er,
 And Absalom, thy son, is thine, O king, no more ;
 But fear not, for a throne secure is thine:
His life and that ! God saith, it may not be :
 ’Tis often thus, to gain a blessing, we
 Are called upon *some darling* to resign.

February, 1840.

THE BIBLE.

—o—

VOLUME OF TRUTH! whose sacred leaves unclose
 To the poor thirsty soul life's springing well—
 Even as God took from Hagar's eyes the veil
 That she might on *that Providence* repose,
 Which makes its own the anxious mother's cause —
 Thou to the Christian, in the gloom of night,
 A fiery pillar art, to give him light,
 Though still a cloud of darkness to his foes.
 "Sword of the Spirit!" turning every way,
 Even as the tree of life, to keep the heart!
 Bright was the conquest thou didst *then* display,
 When "it is written" foiled the tempter's art;
 And Satan shrunk, abashed, in sore dismay,
 And angels took their ministering part.

December, 1839.

LINES SUGGESTED ON SEEING SOME ORPHAN CHILDREN,

OF THE WESTHAMPNET UNION, NEAR CHICHESTER, SUSSEX.

—o—

POET.

WHERE is thy father? Where is she
Who bore thee on her breast;
And fondled, rocking on the knee,
Her baby to its rest?

CHILD.

O Sir! forbear to open wide
The wounds that time hath closed:
Long have those lovers, side by side,
In the dark grave reposed.

POET.

Then art thou left, alone, to steer
A passage through the deep?
Those lost ones brought thee to life's pier,
Then bade thee brave life's sweep!

CHILD.

Heaven wills ! and what heaven wills, commands ;
 I bow to the decree :
 For Heaven hath raised up other hands
 To mann life's oar for me.

POET.

Another Father hast thou found,
 Another Mother too :
 Scarce credit I, on mortal ground,
Such things, my darling, true ?

CHILD.

Yes ! other *parents* have I here,
 And others in the tomb :
 Another in another sphere,
 And *there* another home.

August, 1840.

ODE TO A FLOWER.

—o—

COME, thou beauteous, little flower,
 Ope thy leaves, receive the shower,
 Decorate my rural bower :
 For now 'tis Spring.

Now the fields, in verdure drest,
 Invite the labourer to rest,
 Of his grief his mind divest,
 And care forget.

By yon mountain gently flows,
 The bubbling streamlet and the rose,
 Wildly, by the road-side grows
 And scents the air.

Of this season take thy share,
 Come, with blushing roses pair,
 Partly screen me from the glare
 Of vernal sun.

THE BLUE BELL.

—o—

O ! HOW I love the bright blue-bell
 Pendant from its rocky cell ;
 And what Sabbath thoughts arise
 From its silent melodies.
 Child of Nature, I have seen
 Meadows drest in loveliest green,
 Heard the lark his merriest sing,
 Watched him on the quivering wing ;
 But of Nature's charms thou art,
 Dearest, Blue-Bell, to my heart.
 If the summer sun shine forth
 Gaily on the enchanted earth,
 And the wanton breezes play
 Lamb-like gambols all the day,
 Thou wilt in the general joy
 Tuneful harmonies employ ;
 Loading every fitful swell
 With rich tones from thy blue bell,

As though in every breeze-swept hour
 Nature had a Sabbath dower.
 O how I love the bright Blue Bell
 Pendant from its rocky cell.
 Nature's nursling ! far apart
 In the common's lonely heart,
 Where is seldom passer by,
 And the admirer's curious eye ;
 And heath-flowers blow from morn to even,
 Only in the sight of Heaven.
 Type of *pure reality* !
 Whether we see not or see,
 Thou dost wear one only dress,
 Of most perfect loveliness —
 Yet, most of all, I love to dwell
 In thought upon the bright Blue Bell :
 Hiding in rocky clefts, its life
 Apart from din of worldly strife,
 For then I see, through vistas long,
 Dim prospects of prophetic song,
 Spires tow'ring high in desert air,
 And chimes saluting Sabbaths *there* ;

And willing footsteps pressing on,
To meet before the Mercy Throne,
And the bleak, barren wilderness,
Like Eden in its primeest dress.

July, 1847.

THE SKYLARK.

—o—

EVER on the quivering wing,
Lark, thou seem'st a fickle thing,
Nor can summer's opening flowers,
Woo thee to this earth of ours ;
Brighter colours to thine eye,
Tinge the firmament on high.

Bounding from the world of sense,
Skylark, I would far from hence,
Nor should earth with pleasures glare,
Evermore my soul ensnare ;
For my spirit would aspire.
Upwards, ever mounting higher !

TO AN INFANT.

—o—

I KNOW a pretty infant boy —
 An infant boy in arms ;
 His dimpled cheek bespeaks the joy
 His little heart which warms.

I looked on him, and he essay'd
 To speak a word to me :
 'Twas but an *effort* that he made,
 And yet it *told* of glee.

Yes, of the heart's *pure* glee, that needs
 No diction to express ;
 How far its own delight exceeds
 The pleasures of excess.

I smil'd on him, and he return'd
 The smile: he knew not why,
 And then—as tho' experience taught—
 He heaved a meaningless sigh.

I caught th' infection, and *I* sigh'd;
But there *was* meaning there;
For soon on him the world, untried,
Will lay its weight of care.

Dear little creature, thou hast taught,
Even by that smile and sigh,
That shadows from the lights are caught
Of *life*—as from *the sky*.

June, 1839.

THE YOUNG COTTAGER.

—o—

WHAT a pretty rosy cheek,
Nursed, I ween, with frugal fare ;
What a language does it speak,
Joy and innocence are there.

Beauteous as the flower which grows,
By his mother's cottage door ;
Merry as the rill which flows,
With its rippling song of yore.

Day is one bright *hour* of joy,
Night of dreamless, placid rest ;
May I not, my little boy,
Say that *thou* art truly blest ?

No ! true blessing is a crown
Mortals may below not wear ;
Thou hast sorrows of thine own,
Beauteous though thou art and fair.

“THERE IS BUT *ONE* TIME.”

—o—

THERE is but *one* time for the sun to beam
 Through azure skies his golden rays of light ;
 But *one* time for the silent moon to stream
 Her reflex silver through the shades of night.

There is but *one* time for the flowers of spring,
 But *one* time for the summer's holiday,
 But *one* time for the autumn's gathering,
 And winter's snows may but *one* visit pay.

There is but *one* time for the birds to sing,
 But *one* time for the insect tribe to sport,
 In crawling gambol or on buzzing wing ;
One summer play-time : happy, but how short !

And as to these, to thee, O fated man !
 There is but *one* time, by thy Maker giv'n,
 To know thy highest interests, and scan
 The way appointed from this earth to heav'n.

“To make thy calling and election sure,”
To seal thy peace with Heaven thy wisdom be ;
Knowing that life is fleet and insecure,
That life, succeeded by — Eternity !

Kendal, 1835.

ON GIVING TO A BOOK-PLAT,

A GIFT FROM MY MOTHER, BEARING THE INSCRIPTION "DINNA FORGET,"
A PLACE IN MY PRAYER-BOOK.

—o—

SWEET reminiscence, by a mother giv'n,

Recalling to my thoughts — How great the debt
Of gratitude I owe a gracious Heaven —

“Dinna forget.”

Thou art the finger of maternal love,

Pointing the eye of faith, with jealous care,
To see its portion in the world above,

Through fervent pray'r.

Thou art a portrait of her mind to me,

Imprinting on my soul remembrance still,
That she would have me on the suppliant knee,

Inquire God's will.

Thou art a chain which, in this fleeting earth,

Binds on my soul, the unchanging scene to come;
And from my first recalls my second birth,

And Heaven from home.

“Honour thy mother,” and thy God revere —

Double instruction in one sentence met —

Thou art my watchword ! little dear,

“Dinna forget.”

July, 1839.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

—o—

It was a lonely walk I took
By the banks of a sweetly-rippling brook,
Which led me, by meandering path,
To the dark abode of death.

The moon was shining high and clear,
And the song of the nightingale was near,
With its tone of plaintiveness, so deep,
I said, "'Tis the requiem of those that sleep,
In death's dark chambers here."

The moonbeams on the hallowed blade
In silvery emotions, fitful, play'd,
And I said, while her rays such bright gleams did
throw,
"All is not dark below."

The floweret had a tear in its eye,
The breath of the passing air, a sigh,

And Nature *paused* !* o'er this scene of repose —
 But O, there was one who had inner throes
 Of silent agony.

She bent her o'er a grassy bed,
 And her thoughts were with her “lovely dead ;”
 And she knew not of a stranger near
 That marked each burning tear.

Her eyes were fixed in deep distress,
 And her hands were grasp'd in grief's excess,
 And her tears, like streams, chased down her cheek,
 Whilst her sobs forbad her soul to speak
 Its tale of bitterness.

I broke the silence, and I said,
 “Oh! wilt thou tell me, gentle maid,
 Thy grief — it may, perchance, be I
 Some comfort may supply.”

* Air listens, like the sleeping water, still
 To catch the spiritual music of the hill.

WORDSWORTH EVENING WALK, vol. i. p. 63.

Then in a burst of deepest woe,
As a streamlet long confined doth flow
When once unchained — she told the spot,
And bade me see — the Forget-me-not,
Which bloomed on the sod below.

I gazed on the floweret on which the ray
Of the moon, with quivering light, did play ;
But her *soul* was riveted to the spot,
And she only sighed — The Forget-me-not.

October, 1839.

As life from death is parted by a single thread,
So closely to each other do they dwell :
So, in the temple, is the hourly bell
Near to the one which tolls — “a human soul has
fled.”

“Mors mortis morti mortem nisi morte dedisset,
Æternæ vitæ janua elausa foret.”

HAD Christ—the death of death—to death
Not given death by dying—
The gate of *Life* had never been
To mortals open lying.

LINES ON LOSING MY FAVORITE
LITTLE DOG.

—o—

I NEVER thought, dear dog, that love so strong
Could, to thy species, in my mind belong.
But as the *depths* are never seen so well
As when the water leaves the stone-paved cell,
So looking blankly on the hearth forlorn
I feel I loved thee — thinking till I mourn.

November, 1850.

LINES ON RECOVERING MY LITTLE
DOG JET.

—o—

As springs dried up by Summer's parching breath
Remind us of the voicelessness of death ;
But when the rains renew their onward strife
They heave the breath and utter sounds of life :
So to my hearth restored, my dog, thou art
The very image of a happy heart.

December, 1850.

O WHEREFORE, babe, that piteous ery?

'Tis over — ALL the grief! and now,
E'en, while a tear is in his eye,
A smile lights up his brow.

Sweet Spring! thou Infant of the year,
I love thee with thy clouds and showers,
Which, coming, go: and, everywhere
Bright sunshine gilds our bowers.

March, 1851.

THE REDBREAST.

LINES SUGGESTIVE OF THE POWER OF SYMPATHY.

—o—

How sweet thy solitary note
 To me, thou blessed bird !
 'Twas never heard as yet so sweet,
 And yet how often heard !

O what is there in me that makes
 Thy note so precious now ?
 I see the dappling Autumn tints
 Upon each sylvan bough :

And I am quite alone — *'tis that*
 Which makes thy note so dear ;
 Thou blessed love, that harbingest
 The closing of the year.

September, 1848.

THE LOOK OF TENDERNESS

UPON A MOTHER "SLEEPING THE SLEEP OF DEATH."

—6—

I WATCHED a tender infant's eye
 Upon its mother gaze —
 It was a look that seemed to court
 Smile of maternal praise.

I wept within my soul of souls,
 To think that tender eye
 Should ne'er, on earth, elicit look
 Of mother's sympathy.

Then thought I of *that future day*,
 More bright than mid-day sun ;
 And inly prayed, "Be such thy life
 My child, that more be won

Than mother's smile or mother's kiss,
 Or ought that *earth* can give —
 The life of God within thy soul,
 The life of angels live !"

A CHILD'S LOOK OF REPROOF.

—o—

REPROVE me not ! I cannot bear
 Reproofs from one so mild ;
 They are not meant as such, yet are
 Severe reproofs, my child.

The surly frown I well could brook
 Of those who would upbraid ;
 But there is something in thy look
 Which strikes my spirit dead.

Nor fears the hardy ship to brave
 The billows of the deep ;
 Yet sinks it in a watery grave
 The lightning's vivid sweep.

Then cease, my darling, to reprove,
 For keenly have I felt,
 That what *e'en threatenings* could not *move*,
 An infant's eye can *melt*.

THE BUTTERFLY.

—o—

Not the nimblest I have seen
 Frolic on the subtle wing ;
 Not the shapeliest that hath been
 Poised upon the flow'rs of spring ;
 Tinged not with the deepest die,
 Would I sing thee — Butterfly.

Other than ephemeral hues
 Ask a moral of the muse,
 Other than the feathery sail
 Spread to catch the zephyr's gale,
 Ask the Poet if he can
 Find no theme to *profit* man.

Insect ! bursting into day
 From a shelly womb, to rise
 On new wings, and soar away,
 Wanton in thine own surprise :
 Trace I not, at once, in thee
 What I *was* and *am* to be ?

Sprang I not as thou, at first?
Crawled I not as thou — a child?
Did I not those fetters burst
In my manhood's vigour wild?
Leave I not the scene of time?
Seek I not another clime?

Like thee, restless on the wing,
Never would I sojourn long
Here below; but upward spring,
Though denied "the burst of song"—
Gaily dost thou onwards float,
Though *thou hast no skylark's note.*

August, 1840.

LINES COMPOSED NEAR HUNDHOW,

ON NOT FINDING A PRIMROSE, WHICH WAS THE FIRST I HAD SEEN IN
THE YEAR 1840, AND WHICH I HAD GONE FROM KENDAL, WESTMOR-
LAND, PURPOSELY TO GATHER.

—o—

I CANNOT find the simple child
Of nature, I have come to seek ;
'Twas *here* (or else I am beguil'd)
It bloom'd the other week.

A simple flower it was ; the first
That of its kind had met my eye
This year ; and to my soul rehears't —
“ A spring-tide sun is nigh :

“ And genial rains and zephyrs sweet
Shall to th' auspicious season come ;
Nature shall smile. and thou shalt greet
The offspring of her womb ;

“ The little warblers on the wing,
Or perch'd, as suits their fickle ways,
From dawn to evening's close shall sing
Their own sweet, self-taught lays.”

The flower that whispered this, is gone ;
 Its beauteous form is now no more :
 Of children, Nature hath lost one
 She to the bright sun bore.

Kendal, 1840.

THE TIMID WOOD-PIGEON.

—o—

THOU wilt not let me look at thee,
 Whilst thou art cooing in the tree,
Pleasing thyself, YET SOOTHING ME —
 Thus Charity is kind, not vaunting so to be.

April, 1851.

LINES COMPOSED AT HAWES BRIDGE,
 NEAR KENDAL,
 ON SEEING SOME TREES THERE MARKED FOR THE WOODMAN'S AXE.

—o—

ANOTHER spring-tide shall not call
 Your buds to feel the genial sky;
 For ye are mark'd, I ween, to fall,
 As man is doom'd to die.

Another summer shall not bring
 The throstle 'neath your shade to dwell;
 Though he, unconsciously, may sing
 To you his last farewell.

Another autumn shall not sear
 Your leaves, whose number'd days are told;
 Nor cast, *through you*, a shadow, where
 The streams are gurgling, as of old.

Another winter shall not call
 Your boughs to brave the inclement sky;
 For ye are mark'd, I ween, to fall,
 As man is doom'd to die.

THE APPEAL OF THE CAGED BIRD.

—o—

“I WAS born in the woods ;” my home was there ;
 My pleasure-space was the infinite air ;
 My food was found in the verdant field,
 My drink was the drop which the dew did yield ;
 The branch of the tree was the seat of my song,
 Which warbled its green, stirring leaves among,
 The sweet cool breeze was refreshment to me
 As it gracefully swung the *bird that was free*.

In the valley, the plain, o’er the hill I could roam,
 And in each I discover’d fit place for a home ;
 The breath of each flow’r was rich incense to me,
 And the brooklet the song of my lullaby ;
 From the dawn of the morn to the closing of night
 My song breathed of liberty, love, and delight ;
 Whilst each branch had a voice that responded to
 me,
 “ How happy I am whilst I sing and am free.”

The night had its loves and the day-light its joy,
And pleasure alone was my life's blest employ;
But now, O how chang'd is the lot of the bird!
No answering note of the warbler is heard —
No song but my own: nor does echo reply,
As fondly she did to the bird of the sky:
My song is no longer the wild note of glee —
For I live in a cage and am no longer free.

Kendal, 1835.

SONNET

COMPOSED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SELSIDE, IN WESTMORLAND.

—o—

O, who can look on you, still unimbued,
 Mountains, with your full spirit; rising high,
 Like everlasting spires, to Faith's deep eye;
 Commending emulation of all good,
 With your authority of solitude.
 Ye country poor! whom rarer churches bless
 Than busy townsmen, Nature would redress
 Your wrongs, methinks, if ye would list her mood!
 Ring not the mountains out a deep rich chime
 To solemnize your souls? as on ye gaze
 Their rude, hard features of the elder days,
 And, pausing, catch the echoes of old time?
 Preach **THEY** not *truth*, whom storms and breezes
 pure
 Leave *alike* calm — still patient to endure?

Kendal, 1844.

THE CHURCH-GOING BELL.

—o—

HARMONIOUS sounds the happy Church-going bell
 With feelings that inspire a sacred awe
 Of God — His worship and His law —
 Deeply upon my soul its cadences do dwell.
 And now again with loud yet temper'd swell
 It bursts upon my ear — mysterious in its note,
 Which on the gently-fanning breeze doth float,
 Recalling thoughts of Heaven and prompting
 thoughts of Hell:
 But in its dying accents it doth bring
 Again resemblance to the silent call
 Of the in-working Spirit — uttering
 His voice of admonition to the prodigal —
 Bidding him to the Cross in deep repentance cling,
 And, for the yoke of love, exchange sin's fettering
 thrall.

SOMETIMES the Sun's bright ray
Will break through clouds of gloom,
And loveliest tints of day
The storm itself illumine.

In the dark Winter's shade
The snow-drop HATH appear'd
A beam of hope, *delay'd*,
By contrast more endear'd.

And thus, thro' grief, the beam
Of joyous hope WILL shine;
And comfort's *brightest* gleam
Oft beautify decline.

'*Twas so with one I knew;*
The sweetest glimpse of faith
Was pictured to her view,
On the dark cloud of death.

COME see the place wherein they laid
 Jesus, "the first fruits of the dead!"
 Come, see the place where Mary wept!
 And where her loved Rabboni slept!
 Ah! sure 'twas holy ground she press'd,*
 Where Jesus took, in sleep, his rest!†

Come see the place from whence He rose,
 As one refresh'd by night's repose.
 The garden, mid whose gemmy dew‡
 The "Morning Star"§ his radiance threw,
 Nor dim as glow-worms represent
 The lustre of the firmament.

Full oft, I ween, at close of day,
 Like Mary, thou hast found thy way,

* Exodus iii. 5.

† St. John xi. 12.

‡ St. Mark xvi. 2.

§ Rev. xxii. 16.

Alone, in silence, by thy dead,
 The sorrows of thy heart to spread,*
 When nature, in her stillest mood,
 Breath'd sympathy with solitude.

But cease, fond mourner, cease to weep,
 Thy "dead in Christ" are but asleep —
 And sleep is e'en an earnest giv'n
 Of waking up to life and Heav'n.
 Then let them rest — 'tis well nigh past,
 The morning light is breaking fast.

Come see the place where angels keep
 Their vigils, while the faithful sleep :
 Fluttering, on wings of love, around
 This verdant spot of holy ground ;
 Waiting, impatient, to convey
 Their brother to the realms of day.

* 2 Kings xix. 15.

SONG OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN
THE WILDERNESS.

— o —

GRACIOUS GOD ! Thou still hast been,
Near us, though by us unseen ;
Now too, when, all night, we lie
Beneath the curtain of the sky ;
Near us, when we wake, at morn,
And, rising, hail the day new-born :
Near us, when the noon-tide heat,
Panteth for a cool retreat ;
Nor finds it in the running brook,
Nor in leaf-embowerèd nook :
Near us, when the evening star
Kindles, in the East, afar :
Lighting us, to Thee, in prayer —
God — who art where'er we are.

“ I AM WITH THEE.”

ISAIAH xliii. 5.

— 0 —

“ I AM with thee,” doubt it not,
 When the angry billows roll ;
 When they toss thy fragile bark
 And affright thine inmost soul.

“ I am with thee ” when the storm
 Ruffles all thy darken’d sea ;
 When the North wind whistles loud,
 I uphold and comfort thee.

“ I am with thee ” when the tear
 Thoughts reveal which deeply lie
 In thy bosom ; THEM I hear :
 “ Be not fearful ” — “ *it is I.* ”

NATURE AS SEEN IN GOD AND WITHOUT HIM.

—o—

If grace in me Thy will hath done ;
 O joy ! in the green meadows,
A clump of trees, 'neath which the sun
 Can creep to play with shadows.

If sin my better soul subdues,
 The sun may shine above ;
 Birds sing, flow'rs bloom, and glisten dew ;
 Yet nothing *can* I love.

Thy smile *alone*, by virtue won,
 Thus gladdens heart and eye ;
Without it, even the brightest sun
 Shines, *but to make me sigh*.

Perry Barr, April 12th, 1851.

'Twas spring-tide, and I went to hear
The nightingale's full song ;
The moon was shining bright and clear
Amid a starry throng.

Some time I listened, in sweet mood,
Of half-delighted fear ;
Lest in the bosom of that wood
Her voice I might not hear.

And yet, methought, if silence shall
On that dear bird prevail ;
Of silence she may take her fill,
'Thro' copsewood and thro' dale.

For not a sound o'er earth's wide space
Seems floating near or far ;
'Tis still as when the lake's calm face,
In faith reflects each star.

LINES,

SUGGESTED ON GATHERING A BLADE OF GRASS FROM THE GRAVE OF THE
LATE POET LAUREATE, WM. WORDSWORTH, ESQ., D.C.L.

—o—

DAISIED the turf that roofs thy grave,
Fresh be the dewes the spot that lave,
Gently the breezes o'er it wave,
Nature's own Poet ;
And mildest be the beams that have
The power to show it.

Fitted by Nature from thy youth,
To sweep the lyric strings of truth,
With finger light and Genius both
Profound and tender ;
Sleep, Poet, where thine own lakes smooth
And deep meander.

Thy Yew trees wave their sombre shade*
Where rests thy hoary, honour'd head :

* These Yew trees were planted by Wordsworth himself in Grasmere Churchyard, Westmorland ; in which he was buried, on the morning of Saturday, April 27th, 1850.

And as the sunbeams lightly tread
 At morn or even ;
 They guild the hillocks of SUCH dead,
 With smiles of Heav'n.

In thoughtful mood I sometimes weep,
 Yet joy o'er thine unbroken sleep ;
 As placid as the calm, blue deep
 The storm subsiding :
 Yet coming as a shadow's sweep
 O'er light abiding.

This grassy blade, above thy head
 "Its shelter, from the sunbeams, spread
 To dews,"* that wept the Poet dead ;
 Whose changed vocation
 Shall, now, revive the tranquil scene
 Of graves, o'erarch'd with living green ;
 And wild flow'rs ; *where wild flow'rs have been*
 A generation.

* LINES WRITTEN IN A CHILD'S ALBUM.

Small friendship is *true* friendship while it lasts,
 Of friends, however humble, scorn not *one* ;
 The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
 Protects the lingering dew-drop from the sun.

August, 1850.

WORDSWORTH.

A MORNING WALK.

—o—

It WAS the first of May: and Sun, as bright
 As ever shone upon a rural scene,
 Guided my steps along the oft-trod path ;
 And smiling, sweetly, bade all Nature smile.
 With heart, uplifted to the gracious Giver
 In praise, for all the blessings round me spread,
 I hasten'd onward ; Burneside, to greet
 Thy rustic bridge, and stream, and mid-way rocks ;
 Thy meadows gay, and Chapel, all around
 Protected, by the verdure of green trees.
 'Twas early morn : and, sauntering on their way,
 I met some school-boys ; some, with book in hand,
 And some, with satchel o'er the shoulder thrown—
 Assurance that the hour of Even-tide
 Would mind the labourer of his closing task,
 Ere these should backward trace the path they came.
 O ! nature forms for you, me thought, a sweet
 And lovely avenue, whereby to reach —
 Perhaps otherwise with more reluctant steps —

The village school ; where, ere the pointers mark
 The half-way 'tween the hours of eight and nine,
 The master waits, impatient, your approach.
 And would we train the youthful mind aright,
 (Musing, I said, as greeting them I pass'd)
 To pure instructions we must *lure them on*,
 Giving *them interest*, FORCING ON THEIR CHOICE
 Improvement, to the heart and to the mind :
 As nature, for the school boys whom I meet,
 Spreads, *by the way*, ten thousand sights for love—
 Roots old and tortuous, lin'd with mossy green ;
 And primroses and buttercups, in ranks —
 A fainter, then a deeper tinge of gold —
 And hyacinths, just opening on the stem,
 To lavish incense on the fresh'ning breeze ;
 And violets wild, and daisies, everywhere ;
 And meek anemonies, just peeping forth
 From the soft bosom of a nest of moss :
 Surmounting all that *can be seen*, with song
 Of merriest larks, and with the “ two-fold shout ”
 Of “ the blithe cuckoo ” “ babbling to the vale.”

LINES

SUGGESTED IN MY DRESSING ROOM, ON PREPARING TO TAKE A WALK
BEFORE BREAKFAST ON SUNDAY, MAY 4TH, 1851.

—o—

UP, early, to salute the birth of morn,
I miss the rising vapour of the hearth
From neighbouring houses, to direct my eye
Unto the quarter whence the wind is blowing —
Direction sure, in the foregoing days,
Whether my walk should be prolong'd or no.
Nor do I grudge you, neighbours, of the rest,
Which leaves me in uncertainty of choice.
Fain will I venture on the risk to breathe
The morning air, for long time or for short.
Welcome to me the Sabbath day that brings
Suspension to your labours and prolongs the hour
Of rest—bespoken by the tardy smoke
That will *decide*, ere I return, the doubt,
The question of the day, for sun or shade.
For you I *do* rejoice, that God has giv'n,
In the exub'rance of His love, one day,

One out of sev'n, wherein ye *may* indulge
 A rest, prolong'd beyond your common lot.
 Rest, rest, ye labourers ! and if pray'r of miné
 Can *add* unto the solace of your sleep,
 Unask'd, ye have it : "Gracious God, bestow
 Upon the six-days' labourer blessings rife."
 But for my heart's good-will, I ask of you
 A favour — which I would account mine own —
 Let not the Sabbath bells, *unheeded*, chime :
With me and *for* me let your pray'rs ascend
 Unto our common Father ; as the breath
 Of flow'rs, in undistinguish'd fragrance, blend
 On the pure air, and from the shrine of earth
 By angel-wings are wafted unto Heav'n ;
 That when the evening of our life shall close,
 And labour yield to slumbers of the grave,
 Resting in Hope — for merit's not our own —
 We may awake to gratulate the dawn
 Of the long day of — Immortality.

Kendal, 1851.

LINES WRITTEN FOR THE ALBUM OF
A STRANGER YOUNG LADY.

1 CORINTHIANS iii. 21—23.

—o—

A STRANGER thou canst never be
Wherever thou may'st roam :
If GOD a Father is to thee,
CREATION is thy — Home.

Whatever skies may bound thy sight ;
Thy course, whatever stream ;
That Father claims, by lawful right,
And all are thine in Him.

May, 1851.

A PLEA FOR MY FATHER'S POPLARS.

—o—

FELL not these trees ! 'neath which I play'd

A little child — while yet the spring
Of life, the curls around my head
Wav'd, with the Poplar's *dancing shade*,
To music that the breezes made.

Fell not these trees ! my Father's hand

Hath planted them — it is enough —
(As ye have stood, long may ye stand) ;
This avenue *himself* hath plann'd,
And mem'ry would impose — Command.

May, 1851.

LINES

(SUPPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED TO A CHILD) SUGGESTED BY A MORNING
WALK TO KETTLEWELL, NEAR KENDAL.

—o—

HERE, where I stand, a rocky seat

Was wont, of yore, to stand :

Nor *will of man* had planted it,

Nor shap'd it *human hand* ;

But Nature, bountiful and kind,

Had, for the Wanderer's rest,

Its sweet locality defin'd

Upon the mountain's breast.

Faintly I tell thee what I saw,

From thence, of meadows green,

And sunshine, scaling high the brow

Where foot hath seldom been.

I had two Uncles * — here they sat —

I almost think I see

Their figures now ; but, child, of what

Avail is this to thee ?

* Christopher and Edward Wilson, Esquires.

My Brother William was with us, too —
 That mountain-walk, at even !
 My spirit drinks it all anew,
 As streams reflecting Heaven.

Yet why, of all the walks I took,
 Should *that* rememb'ed be ?
 Perhaps, in my soul, *then first* awoke
 The soul of Poetry.

And they are gone — those Uncles — and
 That Brother, and the stone :
 Nay, Brother, of THY RACE I stand
 Exception and — alone.

But off, my child ! upon the wing
 The butterfly is gay :
 Ah ! why should such a happy thing
 My pensive thoughts delay ?

May, 1851.

OVER THE PORCH AT THE ENTRANCE DOOR OF COLLIN FIELD, NEAR KENDAL,
IS A STONE BEARING THIS INSCRIPTION : —

“Nunc mea mox hujus sed postea nescio cujus.”

—o—

TRANSLATION.

Now mine — then his — but when *he's* gone
I know not who this house may own.

May, 1851.

LINES

COMPOSED WHILE STANDING ON THE BANKS OF THE KENT, IN THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD OF HAWES BRIDGE.

—o—

As thy sweet stream would lull my soul
Unto a transient peace :
So may God's Spirit whisper to
Life's bondage, in release !

May, 1851.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS.

—o—

LORD ! give me daily grace to know
 Thy daily mercies overflow
 The banks, of every action done,
 E'en in the name of Thy dear Son.

Grant me the spirit to confess
 Myself "of all Thy mercies less
 Than least" — that, in humility,
 My steadfast growth may be in Thee.

And if Thy will my life should lengthen —
 That life Thy Holy Spirit strengthen :
 Nor ever may luxuriant shoot
 Forget its succour is — the Root.

If to life's autumn I survive,
 Thy blades beneath my shelter thrive;
 That I may never fruitless prove,
 Through lifeless faith, in active love.

And when my leaf is sear and old
(Its number'd days already told)
O may it fall, the seed to nourish
Of hopes, which shall hereafter flourish.*

* St. John xii. 24.

May, 1851.

WALK TO HAWES BRIDGE, NEAR KENDAL.

—o—

The trees, they are *so friendly to me*,
 Their stretching shadows seem to woo me;
 And often, in their fond embraces,
 I am devourèd with caresses —
 It was, as though two friends, long parted,
 Two sep'rate creatures, yet one-hearted,
 Had met, upon a day of leisure,
 And more than ordinary pleasure :
 For never did mid-summer sun
 More brightly gild the meadows ;
 Nor ever were MORE FREELY thrown
 The oaks' umbrageous shadows,
 Than when, IN MAY, of thy sweet stream
 I ask'd a whisper for my dream.

THE EVE OF PARTING,

LINES LEFT IN MY MOTHER'S PRAYER-BOOK.

—o—

UPON the Cross thy Saviour recommended
 His Virgin Mother, weeping, unbefriended,
 Unto the care of one He dearly lovèd :
 Let not my love for thee be now reprovèd,
 If, in the sun-set of another meeting,
 My spirit fails, 'mid shadows of our greeting ;
 And only tears can vent the full expressing,
 Of mother dearest, a most filial blessing.
 Oft have I caus'd thee—O forgive—the pain !
 I pray for thee—O pray for me again.

Kendal, 1851.

LINES SUGGESTED WHILE SITTING IN SEAFORTH CHURCH,

ON SUNDAY, THE 25TH MAY, 1851, IN THE MINISTER'S FEW, OPPOSITE A
MONUMENT "IN MEMORY OF JOHN RAWSON" AND OTHERS, AND COM-
POSED DURING A JOURNEY BY RAILROAD FROM SEAFORTH TO PERRY
BARR, MAY 27TH, 1851.

—o—

MEMORY.

Whatever I *remember* hath, in some wise, *died!*
 Its *actual* presence is to sense denied;
 Although it *may* return and repossess
 Its former circumstance of time and place:
 As, butterfly, to-morrow, by *this hour*
 I may be *here*; *thou*, pois'd upon *that* flow'r.
 But now thou roamest, killing, by thy flight
 The present *pleasure*, to the sense of sight;
 And leav'st REMEMB'RANCE in thy place alone —
 Initial, cut upon sepulchral stone —
 Or, following slowly, not without a tear,
 Behind the Past, outstretch'd upon the bier.
 But, as *in Nature*, what *HATH* been, *MAY* be:
 So Revelation teacheth certainty;

Laying on "Memory" such emphatic stress
As if she could none otherwise express
The intermediate link in life's mysterious chain,
Connecting what is past, with what shall be again.

WRITTEN IN THE SOUTH FIELDS,
CHICHESTER,

ON THE MORNING OF SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST, 1851.

—o—

Thou said'st these trees were very beautiful —
 “A picture and a study.” Now thou art far off,
 I come to gaze on them again ; and list,
 As 'twere, thy accents on the breeze of morn.
 And wert thou *gone*, oft hither should I stray ;
 Here stand, and upward look, and love the trees
 More dearly, for the memory of thy words —
 “A picture and a study” — here, too, re-collect
 The fragments of the past within my soul,
 Until the rising tear would gather strength
 To speak the musings of a heart subdu'd.

ON READING THE BEAUTIFUL SONNET, ON PRAYER,

BY HARTLEY COLERIDGE, ESQUIRE. (VOL. II. P. 369 OF HIS POEMS).

—o—

FOR that one sonnet let me humbly claim
An int'rest in the thanks due, Hartley, to thy name.
Unknown to thee — if known, yet faintly so —
Not less the debt of gratitude I owe
To one who hath so feelingly unriv'n
The page, most sacred, in the book of Heav'n.
O! blessings rest upon that holy sonnet,
Descending as the dews of grass upon it.
I read, I grasp, I hold, and yet for ever
From that one truth my soul shall never sever.
If clouds alight, and darken mid-day sun,
I will not henceforth think the day-light gone.
I bless thy mem'ry — trusting thou art blest :
I charge thee, Rothay, whisper to his rest.

June, 1851.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED AMID THE RUINS OF LOW MILLS,

BURNT DOWN ON WHIT-MONDAY, JUNE 10TH, 1851.

—o—

THE leaves were green upon the bough,
 The sun was shining bright,
 Gold tints were on the mountain's brow,
 And Nature's heart was light,
 And beating to the merry tune
 Old Kent was humming to the month of June.

Poets have told us, Nature dear,
 That thou dost sympathise
 With joy or grief, by azure clear,
 Or clouded, weeping skies ;
 And yet I saw thee smile on those
 On whom the morn of grief, at eventide, arose.

But still, I ween, I should misread

Some kind intent of thine,

Did I refuse the Poet's creed

T' adopt and countersign ·

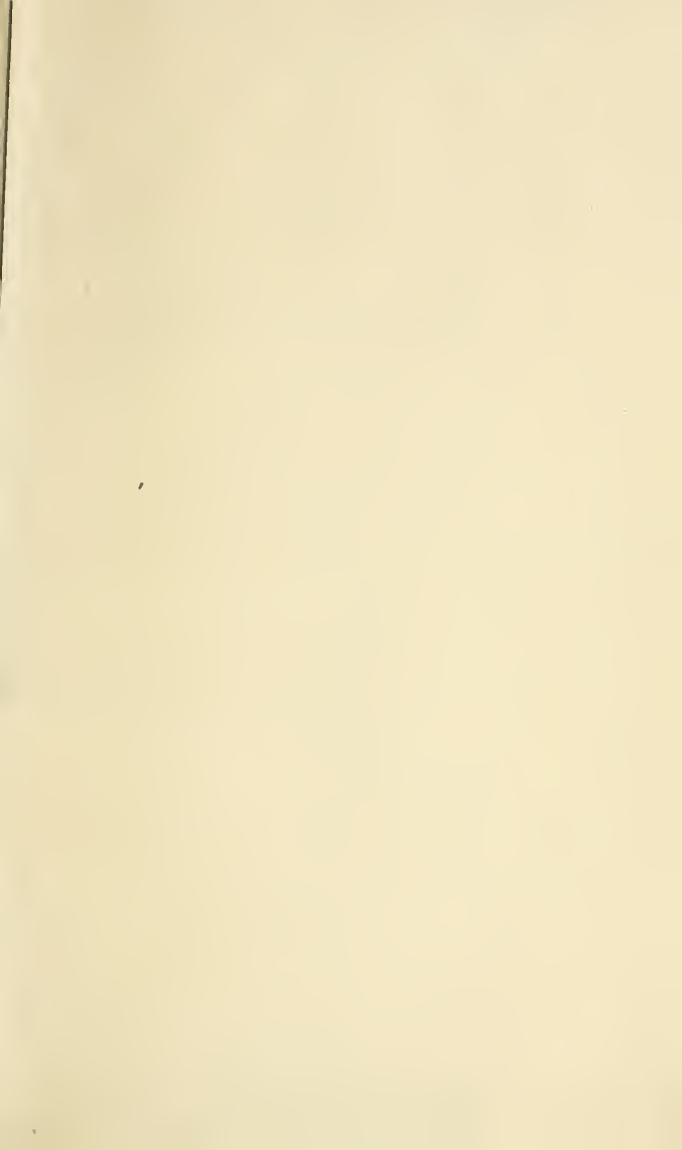
For see ! those bright, those "breathing" flow'rs

Are nourish'd by the smiles of sunshine on the
show'rs.

THE END.

KENDAL :

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